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Application Text

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METHOD AND DEVICE TO REDUCE GATE-INDUCED DRAIN LEAKAGE (GIDL) CURRENT IN THIN GATE OXIDE MOSFETs

TECHNICAL FIELD

5   The invention relates to the fabrication of integrated circuit devices, and more particularly, to a method of reducing Gate Induced Drain Leakage (GIDL) current by selectively increasing electrical gate oxide thickness only in the gate/drain overlap region during the fabrication of integrated circuits.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10   In the fabrication of integrated circuits, as the sizes of semiconductor devices, such as state-of-the-art Metal Oxide Semiconductor Field Effect Transistors (MOSFETs), are scaled down, performance issues regarding the current driving capabilities of these devices exist. Since the current driving capability is a function of both source resistance and gate oxide thickness, better performance in these devices is achievable through thinner gate oxide and spacer layers.

15   However, it has been observed that as the gate oxide is made thinner, gate-induced drain leakage (GIDL) currents degrade the performance of these devices as the GIDL currents become a larger percentage of the total sub-threshold leakage current. The GIDL currents are due to electrons from the valence band tunneling to the conduction band as a result of excessive band bending in

20   the gate/drain overlap region. As these semiconductor devices scale down, the layer thickness of the gate oxide must continue to be reduced in order to provide for suitable gate control over the sub-threshold region. Also, doping density in the channel and source/drain regions must increase to improve punch through characteristics and increase drives. Unfortunately, it has been

observed that by increasing the doping density in the channel and source/drain regions, the

surface electric field also increases, resulting in more band bending and hence, even more GIDL

current. Thus, difficulties exist in providing a scaled down semiconductor device having a

suitable balance between high current driving capability and low GIDL current.

5   One approach for reducing GIDL currents involves symmetrical oxidation in order to

provide a thick gate oxide only in the regions of the gate-source and gate-drain overlap. The

thick gate oxide in the gate-drain region reduces GIDL. However, having a thick gate oxide in

the gate-source region increases source resistance, which in turn, reduces the current driving

capability of the device.

10   Another approach is disclosed by U.S. Patent 5,684,317 to Hwang, who teaches forming

a thick oxide layer only in the gate-drain region in order to reduce GIDL current without

increasing source resistance. The material thickness of the oxide layer in the gate-drain region is

increased by implanting an oxidation accelerating material, such as chlorine or fluorine, to

physically grow a thicker gate oxide layer in that region. Due to the presence of the oxidation

15   accelerating material, the oxide layer in the gate-drain region grows faster than the remaining

portions on the substrate. However, having an increased material thickness of the oxide layer in

the gate-drain region hampers current drives of the transistor and also cause increased stress in

the active area near the overlap region due to volume expansion.

          Accordingly, a need exists for a scaled-down semiconductor device having a thinner gate

20   oxide with improved electrical performance which overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art.

The semiconductor device and its method of fabrication should be cost effective and

manufacturable, should be easily integrated into an existing process flow, and should not

significantly increase the cycle time of the process flow.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5   The present invention provides a method by which field effect transistor (FET) devices

are produced having lower gate induced drain leakage (GIDLs) than FET devices with a similarly

thick gate oxide layer formed by conventionally known methods. The method of the present

invention, as explained hereafter, may be used in the fabrication of all N-channel, P-channel, and

CMOS FET devices.

10   The method of the present invention employs a non-orthogonal ion implant process by

which the gate-oxide layer in the gate-drain overlap region of a FET device is selectively doped

with fluorine or chlorine ions. The dosage of the ion implant is such that the ion concentration

increases the 'electrical' gate oxide thickness near the gate-source/drain corners, thereby

lowering the dielectric constant of the gate-oxide layer in the gate-drain overlap region without

15   actual thickness growth to the ion doped gate-oxide layer. Since GIDL is exponentially

dependent on the magnitude of the surface electrical field, even a slight reduction in the electrical

field results in a dramatic reduction in GIDL. Accordingly, supplementing existing FET

fabrication processes with the method of the preset invention, lowers the effective surface

electrical field in the overlap region, and thereby minimizes GIDL in FET devices wherein the

20   present invention is practiced.

The method of the present invention may be employed in any FET device which is susceptible to increased GIDLs due to a 'thin' gate oxide layer. The method of the present invention may be practiced upon N-MOSFET devices within integrated circuits including but not limited to Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) integrated circuits, Static Random Access

5   Memory (SRAM) integrated circuits, Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory (EPROM), and Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs). Also, the method of the present invention has broad applicability and may be practiced upon P-MOSFET and CMOS devices within integrated circuits, as the process is applicable to the fabrication of those devices.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, provided is a circuit structure

10   comprising a semiconductor layer; an oxide layer formed on the semiconductor layer; a polysilicon layer formed on the oxide layer; a gate structure formed from the polysilicon layer, the gate structure having a defined leading edge; and an overlap region beneath the gate structure and adjacent the leading edge having a predetermined ion implant concentration, the predetermined implant concentration is sufficient to increase the electrical gate oxide thickness in

15   the overlap region.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, provided is a method for fabricating a structure on a semiconductor layer comprising the steps of forming an oxide layer on a semiconductor layer; forming a polysilicon layer on the oxide layer; patterning the polysilicon layer into a gate structure having a defined leading edge, and to expose the oxide layer; and implanting ions into the oxide layer at an overlap region beneath the gate structure and

20   adjacent the defined leading edge to a predetermined ion implant concentration which is

sufficient to increase the electrical gate oxide thickness only in the overlap region without

thickness growth of the oxide layer, the ions being implanted at a tilt angle non-orthogonal to the

plane of the semiconductor layer.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, provided is a method of

5   reducing Gate Induced Drain Leakage (GIDL) current within Field Effect Transistors (FETs)

comprising the steps of: forming on a semiconductor substrate a field effect transistor structure

comprising a gate oxide layer, a gate electrode on the gate oxide layer and two source/drain

regions formed within the semiconductor substrate; annealing the semiconductor substrate;

implanting ions into the gate oxide layer beneath the gate electrode and adjacent the drain region,

10   which defines an overlap region, to a predetermined ion implant concentration which is sufficient

to increase electrical gate oxide thickness only in the overlap region, the ions being implanted at

a tilt angle non-orthogonal to the plane of the semiconductor substrate; and completing the

fabrication of the semiconductor substrate.

An object of the present invention is to provide a method of reducing gate induced drain

15   leakage current by selectively increasing the electrical gate oxide thickness only in the gate/drain

overlap region during the fabrication of integrated circuits.

Another object of the invention is to provide a manufacturable method for fabricating

integrated circuits which will result in reduced gate induced drain leakage.

Other objects, features and advantages will appear more fully in the course of the

20   following discussion.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1, schematically illustrates in cross-sectional representation a partially completed

FET circuit device formed on a semiconductor substrate by conventional processes of the prior

art;

5   FIGS. 2a through 2c illustrate process steps in fabricating a gate structure in accordance

with an aspect of the present invention; and

FIGS. 3a through 3d, schematically illustrate a series of cross-sectional representations

which illustrate the progressive stages in completing the fabrication of a FET device in

accordance with a process of the present invention.

10   The same reference numerals refer to the same parts through the various figure

embodiments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 is an illustration of a portion of a partially completed FET device 2, which can be

15   formed by any known conventional method. As an example, and generally speaking, the FET

device 2 is manufactured by the known local oxidation of silicon (LOCOS) process where

portions of a semiconductor layer or substrate 10, through a lithographic mask, are oxidized to

form field isolation regions 12. Field isolation regions 12 define active device regions and

provide lateral isolation between adjacent devices also formed by the same mask in and on the

20   surface of the substrate 10. For the sake of clarity, the field isolation regions 12 between devices

have been only partially shown. Additionally, the formation of the lithographic mask is done by

conventional lithography and etching techniques. It is to be appreciated that substrate 10 may be

one or more semiconductor layers or structures, which includes active and operable portions of

semiconductor devices, of various dopant concentrations, either dopant polarity, and various

crystallographic orientations, but preferably, the present invention is practiced upon a silicon

5   structure having a 100 crystallographic orientation. Further, since the disclosure applies equally

well to both N and P surface-channel devices, for brevity we present the case of N-MOSFET

devices only. The process is analogous for P-MOSFET. Accordingly, the substrate 10 is

p-doped, meaning that the primary carriers of the substrate 10 are "positive" holes. In P-

MOSFET devices, the first conductivity type is "negative" due to the n-doped substrate having

10   electrons as the primary carriers.

After forming the isolation regions 12, a dielectric layer or gate oxide layer 14 is formed

upon the cleaned active device regions of the substrate 10 by thermal oxidation, as is

conventional in the art. Next, a gate electrode 16 comprised of an in-situ doped polysilicon layer

18 is deposited upon the gate oxide layer 14 by a known method such as low pressure chemical

15   vapor deposition (LPCVD), plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD), or physical

vapor deposition (PVD). The polysilicon layer 18 is etched, as is conventional in the art, to

provide a desired pattern for the gate electrode 16 within the active region of the substrate 10.

Although the thickness of the gate oxide layer 14 is preferably about 20 Å to about 80 Å, because

gate oxide thickness (t_{ox}) depends on its technology node, it is believed that the method of the

20   present invention is useful with any technology node where thinner gate oxides layers are

required. Additionally, and also dependent on the technology node, for the preferred

embodiment of the present invention, the total thickness of the polysilicon layer 18 and the gate

electrode 16 patterned from the highly doped polysilicon layer is preferably about 200 Å to about

1000 Å.

~~Generally, although not necessary for the practice if the invention, further materials may~~

5   ~~be deposited to form additional material layers upon the polysilicon layer 18 of the gate electrode~~

16. The typical material of these layers include metals, metal alloys, highly doped polysilicon,

silicides, and polycides (polysilicon/metal silicide stacks), which are used with the purpose to

improve the electrical characteristics of the device. In a preferred embodiment, a relatively thin

layer of titanium nitride (TiN) is deposited on the polysilicon layer 18 to form a barrier layer 20.

10   The barrier layer 20 is then blanketed with a tungsten (W) layer 22 to complete the formation of

~~the gate electrode 16~~.

As seen in FIGS. 2a through 2c, which generally illustrate the process steps in fabricating

a gate structure in accordance with an aspect of the present invention, the gate oxide layer 14

is grown on the semiconductive substrate 10, preferably a silicon substrate, by thermal oxidation.

15   A polysilicon layer is deposited on the oxide layer 14, and patterned using a photoetching process

to form a gate structure 15. The surface of the gate structure 15 which contacts the gate oxide 14

has a leading edge 17. Next, as shown in FIG. 2b, a photoresist layer 23 is provided over the

surface of the substrate 10 and patterned to expose a portion of both the oxide layer 14 and the

gate structure 15. Implanting with an angled, high dose, low energy, ion implant 24 is conducted

20   with conventional equipment to selectively dope with ions at an overlap region 26 of the oxide

layer 14.

As shown in FIG. 2C, the overlap region 26 is beneath the gate structure 15 adjacent its

leading edge 17. The ion implant 24 is preferably fluorine, and alternatively, may be chlorine or

any other ion that lowers the dielectric constant of the oxide layer 14. In the preferred

embodiment, the fluorine ions are implanted at: (1) a tilt angle of from about 5 to about 15

5   degrees from an axis orthogonal to the plane of the substrate 10, (2) an ion implantation dose of

from about 1E13 to about 1E14 atoms per square centimeter, and (3) an ion implantation energy

of from about 10 KeV to about 20 KeV. Although, the preferred range to the angle of ion

implantation is about 5 degrees to about 15 degrees, it is to be appreciated that the ion implant

angle depends on the stack height of the gate structure 15. It is to be appreciated that implanting

10   of the fluorine ion implant 24 is tailored to attain a preferred ion concentration of about 1E18

atoms per cubic centimeter beneath the gate structure 15 at the overlap region 26. Doping the

overlap region 26 to this preferred concentration selectively alters (lowers) the dielectric constant

of the gate oxide layer 14 near the overlap region.

As shown in FIG. 2c, with the photoresist layer 23 removed, doping to the preferred ion

15   concentration increases the "electrical gate oxide" thickness in the overlap region 26 without

physically growing or increasing t_{ox} of the oxide layer 14 as in prior art methods. Accordingly,

with the gate structure formed by the present invention, further fabrication of the semiconductive

substrate 10 may continue to complete circuit devices.

One such device that can be formed by the processes of the present invention is a field

20   effect transistor. The fabrication of the FET device is shown by FIGS. 3a through 3d which

schematically illustrated a series of cross-sectional representations of the progressive stages.

FIG. 3a starts with the partially completed FET device 2, formed in accordance with (but not

necessarily) the prior art methods discussed in regards to FIG. 1. Prior to conducting ion

implanting of the ion implant 24 at the overlap region 26, as previously explained above with

regards to FIGS. 2a through 2c, a short reoxidation is performed on the substrate 10. Several

5   methods may be used to reoxidize or anneal the semiconductor substrate 10 including but not

limited to thermal methods, Rapid Thermal Processing (RTP) methods, and laser assisted

processing methods. For the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the substrate 10 is

annealed through a thermal method at a temperature of about 800 to about 900 degrees

centigrade for a time period of about 10 to about 15 minutes.

10   After the above short reoxidation period, ion implanting of the ion implant 24 is

conducted with conventional equipment to selectively dope with ions at the overlap region 26 of

the gate-oxide layer 14 and the polysilicon layer 18 of the gate electrode 16. As before, the ion

implant 24 is preferably fluorine, and alternatively, may be chlorine or any other ion that lowers

the dielectric constant of the gate oxide layer 14. Additionally, what is important is that for a

15   typical FET device 2, the preferred implanting of the fluorine ion implant 24 is tailored to attain

an ion concentration of about 1E18 atoms per cubic centimeter at the gate-poly/gate-oxide

interface beneath gate electrode 16 adjacent the drain region 30b. Doping the gate-drain overlap

region 26 to this preferred concentration selectively alters (lowers) the dielectric constant of the

gate oxide layer 14 near the overlap region 26, and thus increases the "electrical gate oxide"

20   thickness in the overlap region 26 without physically growing a thicker gate oxide layer 24 as in

prior art methods.

As illustrated in FIGS. 3b through 3d, the remainder of the fabrication steps continue in

any conventional manner after the above described ion implantation step of FIG. 3a to complete

the FET device 2. As shown by FIG. 3b, further provided on the FET device 2, adjacent both

5   sides of the gate electrode 16 and extending to the field isolation regions 12, are impurity

diffusion regions consisting of a source region 28a and drain region 28b. The edges of

source/drain regions 28a and 28b adjacent the gate electrode 16 define a channel region 29 at the

surface of the substrate 10. The source/drain regions 28a and 28b are typically formed in a

two-stage implantation process with an impurity dopant material to form a lightly doped drain

10   (LDD) and then a heavily doped drain(HDD). If the impurity dopant material used for forming

the source/drain regions 28a and 28b is n-type, where electrons are used in the source/drain

regions as the primary carriers, then the resulting MOSFET is an N-MOSFET ("n-channel")

transistor device. For example, arsenic or phosphorus at a dose of between about 2E15 to about

5E15 atoms per square centimeter and with an energy of between about 5KeV to about 15KeV

15   may be used to produce the n-channel doped drain 28a and 28b. Conversely, if the source/drain

dopant material is p-type, where holes in the source and drain regions are used as the primary

carriers, then the resulting MOSFET is a P-MOSFET ("p-channel") transistor device. For

example, boron di-flouride at a dose of between about 2E15 to about 5E15 atoms per squared

centimeter and with an energy of between about 10KeV to about 25 KeV may be used to produce

20   the p-channel doped drain 28a and 28b. If FET device 2 is formed with a combination of n-

channel and p-channel transistors on the same substrate 10, then the resulting MOSFET is a

complementary FET (CMOS), and may comprise of a plurality of N-MOSFETs and a plurality of

complimentary P-MOSFETs on the same substrate 10.

In forming the source/drain regions 28a and 28b, a first ion implantation is made using

the gate electrode 16 and the field isolation regions 12 to mask the substrate, in order to form the

5   more lightly doped portions of LDD source/drain regions 30a and 30b. Generally, although not

necessary for the practice if the invention, as shown by FIG. 3c, provided on both sides of the

gate electrode 16 are electrode spacers 32. The electrode spacers 32 may be formed from

materials including but not limited to insulating materials such as silicon oxides, silicon nitrides

and silicon oxynitrides. Various processes are used to form electrode spacers 32. Such processes

10   include Reactive Ion Etch (RIE), and the above mentioned material deposition methods.

Typically, electrode spacers 32 are formed by depositing an oxide film, such as tetraethoxysilane

(TEOS) oxide at between about 600 to about 720 degrees centigrade to a thickness of between

about 300 Å to about 700 Å. A second ion implantation is performed to complete the

source/drain regions 28a and 28b with HDD source/drain regions 34a and 34b. In the illustrated

15   FET device 2, the source/drain regions 20 may be doped with any n-type or p-type dopant or

combinations of different n-type dopants or p-type dopants might be used to achieve different

diffusion profiles. Further, it is to be appreciated that the angled ion implantation step of the

present invention, if desired, could be carried out at this stage in the fabrication of the FET

device 2, as there are no apparent advantages or disadvantage in performing this step before or

20   after the formation of either the LDD, the spacers, or even the HDD.

Subsequent to forming the source/drain regions 28a and 28b into substrate 10, substrate

10 is once again annealed to recrystallize the source/drain regions 24a and 24b. As before, the

annealing of the source/drain regions 28a and 28b may also be accomplished through thermal

methods, Rapid Thermal Processing (RTP) methods, and laser assisted methods. For the

5   preferred embodiment of the present invention, the semiconductor substrate is annealed RTP at a

temperature of about 800 to about 1000 degrees centigrade and a time period of about 10 seconds

to about 20 seconds to form the recrystallized source/drain regions 28a and 28b.

Referring now to FIG. 3d, there is shown a cross-sectional schematic diagram illustrating

the last series of process steps in forming a FET in accord with the preferred embodiment of the

10   present invention. Shown in FIG. 3d are patterned interlevel dielectric layers 36a, 36b and 36c.

Patterned interlevel dielectric layers 36a, 36b and 36c are formed by patterning through

photolithographic and etching methods as are known in the art of a blanket interlevel dielectric

layer formed upon the substrate 10. Blanket interlevel dielectric layers may be formed from

insulating materials including but not limited to silicon oxides, silicon nitrides and silicon

15   oxynitrides. These insulating layers may be formed upon semiconductor substrates through

methods including but not limited to Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD) methods, Plasma

Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition (PECVD) methods and Physical Vapor Deposition (PVD)

methods.

For the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the patterned interlevel dielectric

20   layers 36a, 36b and 36c are formed through patterning via photolithographic and etching methods

as are known in the art of a blanket interlevel dielectric layer formed from a silicon oxide

material deposited upon the substrate 10 through a Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD) process

employing Tetra Ethyl Ortho Silicate (TEOS) as the source material. Although insulating layers

formed through other methods and materials may also be employed, the preferred method and

material provide a simple and well known process conventional in the art. The bottoms of the

5   apertures between the patterned interlevel dielectric layers 36a and 36b and the patterned

interlevel dielectric layers 36b and 36c are etched through the gate oxide layer 14 to expose

surfaces of the source/drain regions 28a and 28b, respectively. Conductive contact studs 38a and

38b, which are formed respectively into the apertures between the patterned interlevel dielectric

layers 36a and 36b and the patterned interlevel dielectric layers 36b and 36c, contact the exposed

10   surfaces of the source/drain regions 28a and 28b, respectively. The conductive contact studs 38a

and 38b are conventional to the art and may be formed from conductive materials including but

not limited to metals, metal alloys and polysilicon deposited upon a semiconductor substrate

through methods including, but not limited to, thermal evaporation methods, electron beam

assisted evaporation methods, and CVD methods. For the preferred embodiment of the present

15   invention, the conductive contact studs 38a and 38b are preferably formed from a thin titanium

nitride barrier layer of thickness from about 200 to about 1000 angstroms upon which is formed a

thicker conductive tungsten layer. The tungsten layer is of sufficient thickness to completely fill

the apertures within the interlevel dielectric layers 36a, 36b and 36c.

Upon forming the conductive contact studs 38a and 38b within the patterned interlevel

20   dielectric layers 36a, 36b and 36c, there is formed an FET device 2 of the preferred embodiment

of the present invention within an integrated circuit, which has a reduced GIDL over

conventional FET devices of similar design. It is to be appreciated that the method of the present

invention has advantages over prior art methods in that it reduces GIDL currents without

compromising other device characteristics like sub-vt and drives. Accordingly, the new electrical

flow produced by the application of the method of the present invention allows reduction of gate

5   oxide thickness per scaling rules for deep submicron geometries. Accordingly, the process of the

invention can be used in any double (or more) polysilicon process for making such integrated

circuit devices as DRAM, SRAM, EPROM, ASIC or the like.

Having thus described the present invention in detail and by reference to preferred

embodiments thereof, it will be apparent that modifications and variations are possible without

10   departing from the scope of the invention detailed in the appended claims.

What is claimed is: